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United Nations

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

8 July 2003

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-eighth Session
Supplement No. 29 (A/58/29)

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. By its resolution 56/16 of 29 November 2001, the General Assembly, after taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean,[1] requested the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee held its organizational session (449th meeting) on 3 February 2003 to elect its Chairman and other members of the Bureau. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/16, the Ad Hoc Committee held its session on 8 July 2003 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Committee held one formal meeting (450th meeting) and the Chairman also held a number of consultations and meetings during 2003.

3. At the 450th meeting, on 8 July 2003, the following delegations made statements in the general discussion under agenda item 3: Australia, Indonesia and Pakistan.

4. The Ad Hoc Committee is composed of the following States:

(a) Members (43)

Australia
Bangladesh
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Djibouti
Egypt
Ethiopia
Germany
Greece
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Liberia
Madagascar
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Netherlands
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Seychelles
Singapore
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Thailand
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

(b) Observers: Nepal, South Africa, Sweden.

5. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee were the following:

Chairman:

Mr. Chithambaranathan Mahendran (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. Paul Stephens (Australia)
Mr. Filipe Chidumo (Mozambique)
Mr. Yuri Thamrin (Indonesia)

Rapporteur:

Mr. Modeste Randrianarivony (Madagascar)

Chapter II
Work of the Ad Hoc Committee in 2003

A. Agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee

6. At its 450th meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the following agenda (A/AC.159/L.133):

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of other officers.
3. Report the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/16 of 29 November 2001.
4. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.
5. Other matters.

B. Report of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/16

7. At its 450th meeting, on 8 July 2003, the Ad Hoc Committee considered agenda item 3 on the report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/16 of 29 November 2001. The Chairman of the Committee made the following comprehensive statement on his consultations:

"The Ad Hoc Committee is meeting today in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/16 of 29 November 2001.

"By its resolution 56/16 the General Assembly requested the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

"Since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the situation in the world, particularly in the Indian Ocean region, has undergone major changes. This includes the end of the super-Power rivalry in the context of the cold war, which posed the threat to the security and peace of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean which prevailed at that time.

"Despite the difficulties faced by the Committee in reaching an agreement on the manner of implementation of the Declaration, the validity of the objectives of the Declaration remains unchanged.

"Most importantly, the Declaration sought to preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Indian ocean region and to resolve their political, economic and social problems under conditions of peace and tranquillity.

"As for the work of the Committee, we are also aware that the General Assembly has expressed the conviction that participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian

Ocean in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee is important and would greatly facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to develop conditions of peace and security in the Indian Ocean region.

"This year too, as had been done previously, I held consultations with three permanent members of the Security Council, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, on their possible return to the Committee and participation in the work of the Committee. Regrettably, I have to report to you that these three permanent members of the Security Council informed me that they have not changed their position on non-participation and, therefore, they are unable to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

"Following my consultations with the members of the Ad Hoc Committee — I must say that I could not consult all the members — my own assessment is that the objectives of the 1971 Declaration are still valid. However, in view of the complexities and the difficulties involved in the implementation of the 1971 Declaration, further time would be needed before we embark on any discussion on practical measures to ensure peace and stability in the Indian Ocean in accordance with the 1971 Declaration.

"In the circumstances, the members of the Ad Hoc Committee may consider recommending to the General Assembly that the General Assembly should give more time and allow the Chairman to continue his consultations."

8. During the meeting an exchange of views took place on, inter alia, the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

9. The Ad Hoc Committee reaffirmed the conclusions it had reached during its 1994, 1995 and 1996 sessions and emphasized the need to foster consensual, step-by-step approaches, particularly given the propitious international climate, which was conducive to the pursuit of such endeavours. The Committee reaffirmed the commitment to the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

10. The Ad Hoc Committee remained convinced that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the work of the Committee was important and would assist the progress of a mutually beneficial dialogue aimed at developing conditions of peace, security and stability in the region.

C. Recommendations

11. The Chairman was requested to continue informal consultations with the members of the Ad Hoc Committee and to report through the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

D. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session

12. At its 450th meeting, on 8 July 2003, the Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee introduced the draft report of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.134).

13. In that connection, the Chairman informed the members of the Committee of his intention to hold informal consultations concerning the text of the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

14. At the same meeting the Ad Hoc Committee considered and adopted its report to the General Assembly.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 29.*

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